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ABSTRACT

Readers' theater has much to offer at all levels of student development. When incorporating readers' theater into the curriculum, definite principles of learning from educational psychology need to be emphasized, including: meaningful experiences for students; provision for individual differences among students; and appropriate sequence in learning. Instructors of readers' theater should be heavily involved in inservice educational programs. Means of inservice education should include: observation and evaluation of numerous readers' theater presentations; materials, such as recent literature and audio-visuals, for instructors to read and view as models for instruction in readers' theater; and development and implementation of research design and proposals. (MM)

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READER'S THEATRE IN THE CURRICULUM

Reader's theatre has much to offer at all levels of student development. Most love to read orally in group settings. An attitudinal goal is then being emphasized. Reading orally to others needs definite objectives for student attainment. Random achievement is not to be emphasized. Learning opportunities in oral reading must be related to stated goals. Within this structure, creativity and the creative element of students is to be sought after. Appraisal procedures emphasize determining if goal attainment by students is in evidence. A variety of procedures need to be utilized to ascertain student achievement of objectives.

Principles of Learning and Reader's Theatre

Principles of learning derived from educational psychology provide a framework to emphasize in teaching-learning situations.

First, selections to be read by students in reader's theatre should be meaningful. With meaningful content, students understand subject matter read. Students then can discuss with others content read. Meaning theory was first emphasized in the 1935 National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook. In this volume, W. A. Brownell discussed the significance of student's acquiring what is significant and makes sense. Enthusiasm in reader's theatre cannot come from subject matter not understood by students. Rather, the learner recieves and injects meaning into the reader's theatre activity.

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Second, students do better in reader's theatre if the selection read is interesting, as compared to being dull and boring. With interest, the reader and the subject matter become one, rather than separate entities. Interest makes for effort in a quality program involving reader's theatre. Interest in reading makes for enthusiasm and a desire to achieve, grow, and develop. Certainly, selections read should emphasize the concept of interest.

Third, students need to perceive purpose in reader's theatre. Purpose emphasizes accepting reasons for learning. Time spent on guiding students to accept reasons for learning is time well spent. Inductive, deductive, extrinsic rewards, and exhortation are means to guide learners to perceive purpose in reader's theatre.

Fourth, achievement in reader's theatre must stress providing for individual differences. Each student has a unique starting place in the presentation. Expectations from students should not be excessively high nor too low. The former may emphasize failure while the latter stresses boredom on the part of students.

Fifth, sequence is important for students to experience. With quality sequence, students may well experience success in reader's theatre. Success spurs students on to greater efforts to learn and achieve. Success in achievement is a goal desired by all. Instructors of reader's theatre need to plan for quality sequence, be it a logical or psychological curriculum. With appropiate order of experiences, learners have significant opportunities to develop feelings of sequence.

Instructors of Reader's Theatre

Instructors of reader's theatre need to engage in a continuous program of inservice education.

These instructors then need to observe diverse reading theatre performances and evaluate each in terms of recommended criteria. Observation and evaluation are two vital components of becoming a quality instructor. The observation is in terms of definite goals or objectives accepted by specialists in the field. To evaluate effectively, the instructor needs to have the recommended goals/objectives in mind. A knowledgeable teacher understands and accepts quality goals and objectives as well as means for their attainment. To be certain that the ends are being attained, effective evaluation procedures are utilized. Appraising the quality of the reader's theatre presentation stresses attaching meaning to its worth. Diagnosing inherent weaknesses and determining sequential procedures for remediation are salient to improve performances of reader's theatre.

The instructor needs to have access to a professional library of reading and audio-visual materials. Through reading, the instructor becomes increasingly knowledgeable about techniques and approaches when emphasizing quality as a concept in reader's theatre. Professional writers have content to communicate to instructors of reader's theatre. The subject matter presented is salient, useful, and purposeful. Utilizing the ideas gleaned are helpful to guide students in optimal achievement and progress.

The audio-visual materials, be it slides, filmstrips, films, or

videotapes, provide scenes and situations in how to guide students to attain vital ends in reader's theatre. The content in the audio-visual material is beneficial to the instructor to stimulate, motivate, and encourage students to achieve, develop, and learn.

Workshops need to be conducted to assist instructors to improve their skills in guiding a reader's theatre. Workshops need to have a theme centering around the concept of reader's theatre. All instructors need to attend the general session to identify problems pertaining to guiding student achievement in reader's theatre. Each problem area needs to be clearly stated. After the general session, participants may volunteer to select a problem area to work on. Adequate reading materials, audio-visual aids, and consultant help should be available to assist reader's theatre instructors to solve one or more problems within the committee. Each committee should report progress at selected intervals to other committees. All should have opportunities to learn from other committees in session. Individual projects and activities should also be chosen by the workshop participant. No doubt, a reading theatre instructor has a unique situation to work on which assists in improving student performance. The general session, committee endeavors, and individual work should benefit the instructor to work more effectively with students in reader's theatre.

Attending professional meetings in reader's theatre may guide the instructor to improve his/her performance. Sessions attended should zero in on purposes, procedures, and appraisal of student performance in reader's theatre. Instructors who attend professional meetings should be better equipped to assist optimal student progress as compared to those

who did not attend. Those instructors attending professional meetings should share information acquired with others working in the area of reader's theatre.

A planned series of regional meetings should be held to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes of instructors of reader's theatre. For these sequential, regional meetings, definite objectives need to be in the offing. The objectives should assist instructors to help students achieve more optimally. Selected activities and experiences must be planned for goal attainment. Appraisal should come at diverse intervals to notice if the decided upon ends have been achieved.

Comfortable and useful facilities must be there to emphasize quality as a concept in the sequential, order meetings. Library materials need to be available to be utilized by participants as activities and experiences for goal attainment. Consultant help and guidance should be available to participants as needed. Each consultant needs to have demonstrated excellence in reader's theatre work. Consultants also are able to work effectively with people in the sequential meetings.

Instructors of reader's theatre may do research to improve personal, professional skills. Depth survey of literature covering a specified number of years may well bring to the attention of instructors worthwhile philosophies and psychologies of instruction. Specific teaching suggestions might also be brought to the attention of the researcher.

For research, an experimental study may be designed. With a treatment group using the new approach and a control group utilizing traditional procedures of instruction, the instructor of reader's theatre can

notice which group achieves at a higher level. Internal validity is of utmost importance in the study. For example, measurements instruments used in the pretest and post test should be valid and reliable. The theory of random sampling should be used to equate the treatment and control groups. Research results should provide a quality foundation for instruction in reader's theatre.

In Closing

Definite principles of learning from educational psychology need to be emphasized in reader's theatre. These include:

1. meaningful experiences for students.
2. interest and set establishing in ongoing activities.
3. purpose and acceptance of reasons for learning.
4. provision for individual differences among students.
5. appropiate sequence in learning.

Instructors of reader's theatre should be heavily involved in inservice educational programs. Means of inservice education should include:

1. observation and evaluation of numerous reader's theatre presentations.
2. materials, such as recent literature and audio-visuals, for instructors to read and view as models for instruction in reader's theatre.
3. workshops emphasizing general sessions, committees endeavors, as well as individual projects.
4. attendance at professional meetings on the state and national levels.

5. planned, series of meetings to be held involving instructors of reader's theatre.

6. development and implementation of research designs and proposals.

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